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BETA

Who Packs Your Parachute?



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Leadership

I cover ways we connect to accomplish greater things.

Charles Plumb was a U.S. Navy jet pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent six years in a communist Vietnamese prison. He survived the ordeal and now speaks on the lessons learned from that experience.

One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. "You were shot down!" "How in the world did you know that?" asked Plumb.

"I packed your parachute," the man replied.

Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man pumped his hand and said, "I guess it worked!"

Plumb assured him, "It sure did. If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today."

Praise what you want to flourish.

Plumb couldn't sleep that night, thinking about that man. Plumb says, "I kept wondering what he might have looked like in a Navy uniform: a

white hat, a bib in the back, and bell-bottom trousers. I wonder how many times I might have seen him and not even said 'Good morning, how are you?' or anything because, you see, I was a fighter pilot and he was just a sailor."

Serve even when you are not seen in the act.

Plumb thought of the many hours the sailor had spent on a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands each time the fate of someone he didn't know.



Who's packing yours?

Now, Plumb asks his audience, "Who's packing your parachute?" Who has done something that has helped make your day safer – or easier or more pleasant – or who have you witnessed “packing” for someone else?

Recognize them right away.

Each of us are touched by individuals who provide what we need to make it through the day. Some help inadvertently. Praise that person anyway. You are supporting the kind of behavior you respect – making it more likely to happen again.

We all need several kinds of parachutes.

Plumb also points out that he needed many kinds of parachutes when his plane was shot down over enemy territory - he needed his physical parachute, his mental parachute, his emotional parachute, and his spiritual parachute. He called on all these supports before reaching safety.

Sometimes in the daily challenges that life gives us, we miss what is really important. We may fail to say “hello,” “please,” “thank you” or “congratulations” – looking that person full in the face, without rushing the words.

As you go through this day, take the time to recognize those who packed your parachute.

Thank *you* for packing mine.

I am this to you today as my way of thanking you for your part in packing my parachute, dear readers.

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